

## INTRODUCTION

In May 1993, House Bill 1209 made a landmark commitment to education and high achievement standards that has changed and improved our schools dramatically: All children can learn. It's now 2006, and our world economy is even more globally competitive. As Washingtonians, we must be even more resolute: All children must learn.

Since 1993, the number of students meeting or exceeding our academic standards has doubled. Four times as many students are tackling the challenge of Advanced Placement courses and our scores on college entrance tests, such as the SAT and ACT, are some of the highest in the nation. Success stories can be found throughout the state, even in schools and districts where historically the odds have been stacked against student success. There is much to celebrate.

K-12 educators have accomplished these outstanding academic gains by focusing teaching on our standards, aligning limited resources to those standards, and working both harder and smarter. **They have done so with less buying power than they had in 1993.**

Today, however, every child must have the skills to succeed in a global society. To reach that goal, we must once again double, and in some groups more than double, student achievement at a highly accelerated pace. Students who are still struggling to meet standards are those with the greatest need for intensive academic and non-academic support.

To reach our neediest students and double total student achievement by 2014, and meet our graduation goals for 2008, Washington must make immediate, significant state investments in the redesigned K-12 system. There must be a stronger link between public school funding and the conditions of learning and teaching within the schools. For this reason, "Washington is at a school finance crossroad."<sup>1</sup>

The K-12 Advisory Committee recommends the following investments in order to reach our state learning goals, prepare our students to compete successfully in a world economy, and eliminate our achievement gap:

1. **Reengineer** schools based on research-driven investments
2. **Restructure** our system of educator development and compensation
3. **Realign** curriculum and instructional supports and professional development
4. **Redesign** our education funding system
5. **Recalibrate** our accountability system

After describing the Advisory Committee's goals, these five recommendations are outlined with a description, goals to be met, recommended implementation strategies, and statements of need.

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<sup>1</sup> Odden, et al. (p. 1)

## **GOALS AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

In 1993, Washington State passed Education Reform with the intent “to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible citizens, to contribute to their own economic well-being and to that of their families and communities, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives.” The Education Reform law added the following four learning goals to the Basic Education Act:

1. Read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings;
2. Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
3. Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
4. Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

The K-12 Advisory Committee has further defined these goals for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by developing the following key goals linked to meaningful performance measures:

**Goal 1:** All students will enter kindergarten with the interpersonal, language, early literacy, and thinking skills needed to succeed.

Possible Measures: Kindergarten readiness indicators aligned with revised Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks

**Goal 2:** All students will transition from third grade proficient in reading and mathematics and demonstrated ability to function successfully as responsible participants in their learning.

Possible Measures: WASL, English language learners assessments, Project-based demonstrations

**Goal 3:** All students will transition from eighth grade with proficiency in core academic subjects, demonstrated citizenship skills, and an initial plan for high school and beyond.

Possible Measures: WASL, Classroom-based assessments, Student plans

**Goal 4:** All students will graduate with both the multicultural and international perspectives and skills needed to live, learn, and work in a global society.

Possible Measures: Language and culture courses, International Baccalaureate, Student plans

**Goal 5:** All students will complete a rigorous high school course of study with proficiencies in core academic skills needed to successfully enter a post-high school education program or their choice of a career pathway for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Possible Measures: International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement classes, Higher Education College Board college entrance assessments,

Number of years of math taken, Remedial courses at community or 4-year colleges, Graduation rate, Student plans, Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) studies, Career and technical education classes, High demand career pathways (Student plans), Program articulations

**Recommendation 1: Reengineer schools based on research-driven investments in a staffing and resources model that will provide each student with rigorous personalized learning opportunities in a safe, supportive environment, with extra supports for struggling students.**

Substantial work has been done to build an evidence-based model for resources schools need. The committee supports the key elements of this model, but recommends that it be phased-in over the next six to eight years with full implementation within the decade. The impact of recommendations should be reviewed and revised on a set schedule. The phase-in proposal is intended to focus on building and strengthening capacity while strategically investing in increased staffing.

Specific recommendations to be implemented in the next four to six years are as follows:

- **Implement an early learner staffing and support system** that provides the time and early interventions to help all students pre-k to third grade achieve high levels of reading and mathematics skills. **Full-day kindergarten** for all children should be phased as highly-trained staff, appropriate curriculum options and space are available to support the new program. As part of transitioning, full-day kindergarten should be coordinated with **expanded preschool programs** in coordination with the Department of Early Learning. In conjunction with the phase in, pilots of seamless ungraded primary programs with more individualized instruction should be supported.
- **Support struggling students** by providing additional learning opportunities through tutoring and additional targeted instruction during and after the school day and school year (summer school, extended day, Saturday programs, etc). The successful principles and program elements of the “Reading First” model should guide both elementary and secondary reading support; and similar program elements and principals should guide a parallel “Math Counts” model K-12.
- **Target support for the academic success of English Language Learners (ELL)** through the design and implementation of an evidence-based, unified state English Language Development curriculum menu and a statewide, skills academy on research-based practices for teachers who serve ELL students in the mainstream classroom and in intervention programs. Our current accountability system shows that many ELL students need more support to develop both language and academic proficiency. Reinstate the pre-school ELL program allocation that was eliminated in 1997.

- **Improve funding for special education**, phased-in with the first wave of funding enhancements. As of June, the Advisory Committee assumes that special education will be funded as a derivative of general education and appropriately recognizes students and districts with differing and more intensive needs. The funding formula for special education is therefore dependent on concluding discussions of general education formulas. Please see the “Next Steps” section of this report for anticipated further action regarding the special education funding formula.
- **Increase the allocation for gifted students** to insure that our most capable students will be challenged to excel. Couple new funding with an evaluation of screening and program placement practices to insure that the full range of our diverse student population has opportunity for access to programs.
- **Reduce class sizes and increase funding for rigorous career and technical education** to provide additional links to careers, especially in high demand fields. This further recognizes the talents of diverse learners.
- **Personalize education for students and their families.** Provide K-12 students and their families planning and mentoring through programs such as Navigation 101 or Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID). Develop a more integrated system of family and community outreach to support all students and keep them academically engaged. Aggressively pursue drop-out intervention, prevention, and retrieval strategies with community partnerships.
- **Fund ten days of time for educator professional development** phased-in over four years; four days in the first biennium and four days in the next biennium. To keep us on the cutting edge of providing world class instructional experiences for our students, staff must have access to content-rich, job-embedded, on-going learning opportunities.
- **Fund instructional coaches and mentors** to help improve instruction, use curriculum, and meet students’ special needs. We recommend phasing-in this initiative starting with mathematics content and ELL instructional coaches.

**Recommendation 2: Restructure our system of educator development and improvement, and compensation to attract, prepare, retool and retain world-class, culturally-competent and diverse teachers and education leaders.**

We need to transform the teacher and school leader development and improvement system, including a radically new pre-service structure; two years of strong support for induction (an early learning system for teachers); a tiered, performance-based certification system, including the addition of a strong mentor certificate; a statewide

data-driven professional development system to help existing teachers grow and improve and diversify skills; and a rigorous, objective statewide evaluation of results.

### **Educator development**

- **Create the Washington Instructional Practices Institute** implemented by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with policy oversight by the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB), to focus on developing creative, innovative teaching skills related to individual student learning styles. This institute would use the expertise of exemplary Washington educators and national and international experts to design a world class professional development center for performance based certification and evidence-based instructional practices targeted to the needs of Washington students. The Institute would combine face to face and virtual interactive learning opportunities for teachers, teacher leaders, school and district leaders, and paraeducators. It will take advantage of the technology, and the teaching, and leadership expertise in our state and the world, and will offer expert teaching sessions and instructional modules, and include performance activities for participants. Topics would include such issues as: cultural and gender influences on learning styles, expanding excellence in mathematics instruction, middle school curriculum and instruction issues, and culturally sensitive family engagement. Teacher preparation program faculty members will be included in the Institute so that the practices designed as part of high-impact instructional strategies will be imbedded into teacher prep programs. We recommend investigating the possibility of creating a public/private partnership to help support the institute's work.
- **Expand novice teacher support** to include two years of mentoring support. "Early learning" for teachers will have just as important a payoff as early learning for students.
- **Provide Mentors/Coaches to help** immediately link teacher learning with classroom practices, without taking the teacher from the classroom. We recommend phasing-in this initiative starting with mathematics content and ELL instructional coaches.
- **Improve quality control on teacher licensure on the Professional Certification** through standards-based professional certification that is evaluated at the state level through an evaluation process similar to that of the National Board Certification. An objective uniform, standards based system will be clear in its expectations, consistent in the application of standards, provide fairness, and accountability in the assessments.
- **Ensure excellent school and district leadership** through an evidence-based system of Principal and district leader internship, induction, and coaching that guarantees a high quality practicum experience in pre-service, robust support in

the early years, and ongoing coaching. With the added funding, examine and refine the selection process for entering these critical leadership roles.

### **Educator Compensation**

- **Increase teacher base salary** to maintain purchasing power and stay competitive. Design a strategy to eliminate historical salary inequities (salary grandfathering) over the next several years.
- **Retain the current salary structure but strengthen the process of recognizing professional development that is relevant to student learning and improved teaching.** Pilot alternative compensation structures that link elements having the greatest impact on teacher and administrator quality and student achievement, such as a multi-tiered licensure system and school-based performance pay.
- **Provide compensation for knowledge and skills** at three levels:  
1) Professional certification, 2) mentor/coach certification, and 3) National Board Certification to provide incentives for continued professional growth.
- Recruit and retain high quality and culturally diverse teachers by investing in **conditional loan scholarships** and **wage premiums** in order to meet the need for quality teachers in high demand areas and subjects such as, mathematics, science, special education, and English language learner programs.
- **Recognize prior related experience of educational staff associates** (e.g. nurses, psychologists, counselors) **as well as career and technical educators** on the salary schedule. Making salaries for these high demand educators competitive would actually save districts money.
- **Allocate compensation for administrators, principals, and classified staff** at updated and competitive rates.

<b>Recommendation 3: Realign curriculum and instructional supports to our state learning goals, graduation requirements, and an evolving international context.</b>
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We recommend developing a statewide system to provide districts with a few excellent, well aligned curriculum choices (both school-wide and intervention/acceleration materials), with reduced costs and with strong professional development support for teachers to learn to use those materials.

- **Identify rigorous, relevant, and culturally competent curriculum materials** that are aligned with our state learning standards, which include effective classroom assessments to help teachers differentiate instruction for struggling and/or advanced students, that include focused intervention materials and that commit effective professional development from the publisher. OSPI should

have the authority to enter into statewide contracts with selected publishers to reduce costs and guarantee strong implementation support to districts who adopt these programs. Excellent educator screening and selection processes have already been developed at OSPI through the Reading First program. Given the data on student achievement in mathematics, the work in mathematics must begin immediately. This gives struggling districts the choices to select aligned curriculum material. The State Board of Education should include curriculum alignment as a component of its accountability system. In order to implement the curriculum, leadership must be provided at the state and regional level to develop the capacity to use the aligned core curricular products and related instructional tools. Focused teacher and administrator training and coaching is crucial.

- **Increase rigor** in the eleventh and twelfth grades by strengthening Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate opportunities, dual credit programs such as Tech Prep, college in the high school, apprenticeship, and academic and trades Running Start programs for post high school options. This work shall be done in conjunction with higher education and the Workforce Training Board.
- Explore and disseminate promising practices and programs to increase student access to **World Languages beginning in the early grades** as well as creative approaches to building international perspectives into existing curriculum and student projects.
- **Re-invent mathematics and science education** by creating private and higher education partnerships, developing instructional materials that engage all students, preparing educators to use high impact strategies, providing grants for an intensive school-based mathematics and science improvement program in our neediest schools, and with a public campaign to engage students and their parents regarding the importance of these subjects.
- **Assure that rigorous on-line courses and research-based intervention programs** are available in all school districts. This is one avenue to assist students in their individualized educational needs. Students can complete credit recovery courses, take courses not usually available in their district, take courses at times more convenient to their schedule, and/or complete the requirements for graduation earlier.

<p><b>Recommendation 4: Redesign our education funding system to adequately and intentionally support a new definition of student success.</b></p>
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This recommendation relates to the structure of education finance, based on the prior three recommendations that drive additional state funding. First, the structure of education finance is intended to be more purposefully linked to what schools and students need and for what they are accountable. The new funding system should

reduce reliance on the role of local levies and increase the state role in funding public education. It is intended to increase equity among school districts.

Specifically, the Advisory Committee recommends:

- **Base funding formulas on a series of elements of school and district funding characteristics** to make the system more transparent for the public.
- **Design funding formulas to implement the new funding system consistent with the accountability measures** that are developed.
- **Re-evaluate local levy authority** as new funding and programs are implemented..
- **Support appropriate funding** for principal(s), school secretaries, librarians, and classified staff.
- **Allocate funding per student** for professional development, technology, and instructional materials.
- **Allocate district funding** for operations and maintenance funding, including items such as utilities, insurance, general supplies, and maintenance supplies.
- **Eliminate grandfathering** of higher salaries and higher levy authority over time as state resources increase. This would eliminate historic inequities in the current system and helps all districts have an equal chance at attracting high quality teachers.
- **Develop a mechanism to carry forward the work that has begun with Washington Learns.** Systemic, sustainable, research-based recommendations that reflect short and long term goals to improve student learning are needed. The new finance system should be reviewed at least every six years.

Note: The recommendations contained here are over-arching concepts; specific funding formulas will be adopted by the Advisory Committee in July and August and included in the committee's final report to the Steering Committee.

<b>Recommendation 5: Recalibrate our accountability system to motivate school and student success and to focus resources on proven strategies.</b>
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Funding and accountability must be linked. Current elements of our accountability system include transparent data, school improvement assistance, and federal sanctions. To improve our accountability program, schools need more support and incentives for student and school success. Existing school improvement programs must



be continued and strengthened based on research regarding results. Schools in need of improvement may need to follow specific requirements to improve performance and their flexibility should increase as performance improves. The State Board should continue the development of the accountability system that keeps districts focused on developing the talents and abilities of our state's students.

## **NEXT STEPS AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

Several components of the funding and policy study remain incomplete as of June 28, 2006. In the next 60 days, prior to final recommendations from the Advisory to the Steering Committee, these components will be addressed and included in the Advisory Committee's final report.

### Special Education

Recommendations on this element of a school program, and the funding formula, are currently incomplete. The current special education funding formula and the formula recommend by consultants Picus and Odden are a derivative of the funding level for general education. At this time, the Advisory Committee recommends continued presumption that the funding formula will be a derivative of the general education funding formula. However, given that the committee has not concluded discussions on the base funding, no specific recommendation is included here. Further, the committee intends to discuss a draft formula at the July meeting, hold public comment, and finalize the formula in August. The August recommendation will address the appropriate derivative for a special education funding formula, and include specific recommendations for an index limit on the number of funded students in special education and safety net policy.

### Funding Formulas

For each element of the school funding model and the major system supports, the Advisory Committee will recommend the structure of a funding formula.

### Local Revenue

By August, the committee intends to finalize recommendations regarding the role local levies should play in total K-12 funding; which elements of the funding model should be paid by the state and how much by locally-raised levies; and how should levy equalization be revised given the answers to the questions above.

### Reference

Odden, A., Picus, L.O., Goetz, M., & Fermanich, M. (June 28, 2006). *An Evidenced-based Approach to School Finance Adequacy in Washington*. Report prepared for the K-12 Advisory Committee of Washington Learns. North Hollywood, CA: Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.